/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[28] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
513 beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[031] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special compartment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the [233] cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the [252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the [415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is 352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the 415 utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat 412 stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family 585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

/17 cont./

342 newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one [585] small house.

The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, 262 corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten, [263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re- [888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all [593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are 428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided [592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

[753 cont.]
silver and gold studs, shoes of soft leather and gold or silver embroidered, pointed overshoes with thick soles and high heels, on the head a 15-centimeter-high conical cap of silk richly ornamented with gold and silver lace, buttons, plates, and chains, and finally a white interwoven veil which hangs far down from the cap. The braid of hair is entwined with white stripes of

Fig. 445. Cherkess fully armed, with Woman and Girl. Domed tents in background. (From Spencer, 1837.)

cotton that hang down to the feet. Under the shirt the girls always wear a tight bodice of leather that is not taken off until the wedding.

Dwelling. The farmsteads of the Abkhaz do not lie next to one another as in a village, but are widely scattered and hidden in the dense tree-growth of the gardens in the vicinity of a spring or brook. The newer houses are [754] made of planks on piles, in the style of the Mingrel or Imeretin. The older huts are the most primitive in all the Caucasian forest regions and resemble the huts in the summer encampments of Macedonian shepherds. [Fig. 446 appears here.]

K
AE
391
K
53
142

[754 cont./

Fig. 446. Kabardin Woman (From Count J Zichy)

A
342

The main house (p'ats'kha) is rectangular; the walls are merely plaited twigs and even in winter are only rarely covered with ferns. The flat or slanted thatched roof is supported at the front door by two inclined posts (amakratl-khkwa = scissors) meeting at the top, one post in the back wall, and four corner posts standing at a distance of some 30 to 60 centimeters from the house. The front part is the living space; the back part, partitioned off, is reserved

A [754 cont.]
for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whetstone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons hang on the walls.

Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

[755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press, barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

[See Top of This Page--Analyst]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *d-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaĥwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *ahlakùt-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*d-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswd-ĥwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *d-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswd*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *dămən*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwdyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzdk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons* (*to whom are subject seven gods*), *and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[1] *Alaĥwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *hwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *govt* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An, Anu—Antswd*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.